

A Worksheet for Articles about Diagnostic Tests

1. Determine Relevance: *Is this article worth taking the time to read? If the answer to any of these questions is No, it may be better to read other articles first.*

Based on the conclusion of the abstract or article:

A. Will this information, if true, have a *direct* bearing on the health of your patients and is it something *they* will care about?

Yes (go on)

No (stop)

B. Is the problem addressed by the diagnostic test one that is common to your practice and is the test available to you?

Yes (go on)

No (stop)

C. Will this information, if true, require you to *change* your current practice?

Yes (go on)

No (stop)

2. Determine Validity: *If the answers to all three questions above are Yes, then continued assessment of the article is mandatory. Study design flaws are common; fatal flaws are arresting.*

D. What is the disease being addressed? What is the diagnostic test?

Explain _____

E. Was the new test compared with an acceptable “gold standard” test and were both tests applied in a uniformly blind manner?

Explain _____

F. Is the new test reasonable? What are its limitations?

Explain _____

G. What are the sensitivity, specificity, and predictive values of the test?

$$\text{Sens.} = \frac{a}{a + c}$$

$$\text{P.P.V.} = \frac{a}{a + b}$$

$$\text{Spec.} = \frac{d}{b + d}$$

$$\text{N.P.V.} = \frac{d}{c + d}$$

		Disease	
		+	-
Test	+	a	b
	-	c	d

**H. In terms of prevalence of the disease, are the study subjects similar to your patients?
Varying prevalences will affect the predictive value of the test in your practice.**

Yes

No